

## Women at Work in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



How far have women come since “Women’s Lib” started in the 70’s? Are women making as much as men are for the same work? Are women getting promotions and raises now the same as men are? Unfortunately, although many more women now are in the labor market than in 1970, the overall situation in the working world for women has not improved as much as most people like to think.

According to Alexis M. Herman, U.S. Secretary of Labor from 1997-2001, six out of ten women age 16 or over are now in the labor force. Those between 35 and 44 years of age have the highest rate of labor force participation. Nearly 4 million women have more than one job. Yet, compared to every dollar earned by white men: White women earn about 75 cents, and African-American and Hispanic women are only earning 65 and 55 cents, respectively. Ms. Herman says, “Research shows that about 40 percent of that pay gap cannot be explained by differences in experiences, skills or the jobs held by men and women. It is largely the product of plain, old-fashioned, stubborn discrimination.”

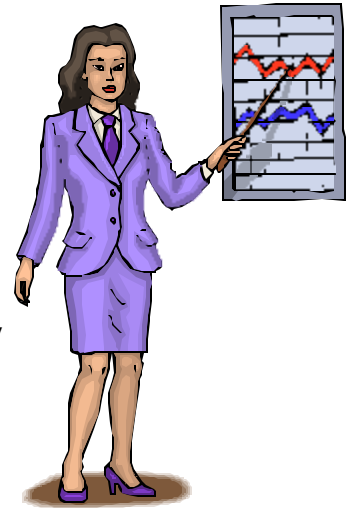
### More bad news

In corporate America, although women make up half of professional and managerial workers, only 5 percent of top management jobs are held by women—the “glass ceiling” is still firmly in place. In fact, more women work as teachers (excluding postsecondary), secretaries, managers, administrators and cashiers than any other areas of work. Nearly one out of five women work in one of these occupations, which are traditionally relatively low-paying.

### So what can you do?

- Go into a traditionally male occupation. The more “male” the occupation, the better-paying it is for its education level. Conversely, the more “female” the occupation, the lower its pay.
- Get a good postsecondary education. Education does pay off for women as well as men. Generally speaking, the higher your education level, the higher your pay will be. However, do your research. This doesn’t hold true for every field.
- Research the company and the industry you want to work in. Try to find out the following:
  - What percentage of the upper management is female? Same with the board of directors and highest paid workers.
  - Does the company have a mentoring program, and if so, what percentage of the mentors and mentees are women?

- What kind of commitment does the company have to promoting women's and minorities' careers?
- What support does the company offer for training and executive education? What percentage of participants are women?

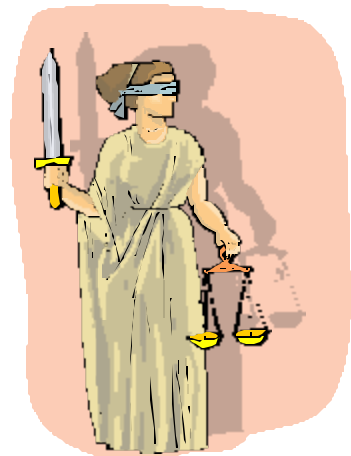


- Know what you're worth and negotiate for the salary you deserve. Your entry level on the wage scale will affect future pay and promotions. You can see what the typical wages are for many occupations in Utah at this website:  
<http://wi.dws.state.ut.us/pubs/UOW/statewide.pdf>.



- Find a female mentor. The key to cracking the glass ceiling is going to hinge on having a woman above you who can help you negotiate the ins and outs of advancing in that company. If you can't find a female mentor in your own company, try looking in the upper levels elsewhere for a female role model / advisor. Women's professional associations are a good place for this.

- The law is clear and is a powerful tool. If you are being discriminated against because of your gender, take the necessary steps to get the situation remedied. This may be possible by working within the organization, or it may require you to look into legal remedies through the Labor Commission or other entity.
- Help other women along as you progress. Speak up against unfair treatment in the work place and stick together with other women when the going gets rough.
- You may be able to work for yourself—either as a contract employee setting your own terms, or by starting your own business (see pages 82,83).



For more information:

<http://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/09/art3full.pdf>  
<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/ww2000/tables.htm>  
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/audience/aud-women.htm>  
[http://www.feminist.com/fairpay/f\\_wagegap.htm](http://www.feminist.com/fairpay/f_wagegap.htm)